

MEMO

DATE: February 2, 2006

TO: Transportation and Communications Committee

FROM: Bob Huddy, Senior Transportation Planner
213-236-1972, huddy@scag.ca.gov

RE: I-710 Tunnel Option Communications

Background:

SCAG has received communications (attached) from the City of South Pasadena dated November 29, 2005 and December 23, 2005, requesting possible amendments to the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan, affecting the 710 Gap Closure project from Valley Blvd. to California Street, specifically to consider inclusion of the tunnel options now the subject of a feasibility study. At this time, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has not yet completed the ongoing 710 tunnel feasibility study. The results of this study are expected in April 2006. SCAG staff are in the process of reviewing this request for an RTP amendment by the City of South Pasadena. Upon review of this amendment request, SCAG staff will consider what action is advisable, and will report back to the TCC on this issue, no later than March 2006.

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**Mark Pisano, Executive Director
Southern California Association of Governments
818 West Seventh Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435**

Dear Mark:

Thank you for setting time aside on January 12 for meeting with me and a few other representatives of South Pasadena. We are looking forward to this opportunity to advance the resolution of the 710 conflict that we initially addressed in our meeting last August 16, and our subsequent telephone conversation of September 6.

South Pasadena had hoped that by this year end we would have in place, as we anticipated in the conversations just mentioned, the protocol that would govern once the feasibility study is complete. As you know, that study is proceeding toward completion with an anticipated completion date in February 2006. As that time approaches, our South Pasadena citizenry have only become more apprehensive that the city is being asked to invest in the tunnel investigation without receiving our consistently-requested reassurance that this study will not lead to a revival of any surface freeway option.

Our City Council has therefore taken the initiative to formulate the protocol that we believe should and must govern from here on out to bring the 710 matter to conclusion, and put to rest our citizens' apprehensions about the state and regional agencies' commitment to ratify the reality that the surface road will never be built. Let me set forth that protocol now:

A. Upon completion of tunnel feasibility study, in the expectation the finding of feasibility will be favorable, the agencies (Caltrans, SCAG, MTA) will agree as follows:

1. To sponsor jointly the earliest possible amendment to RTP to replace the surface freeway with a tunnel route specified.

2. To sponsor jointly a legislative bill that would relinquish the surface route 710 from section 622 of the Streets and Highways Code, and remove the Martinez exception in section 100.4.

3. To join in or not oppose a legislative bill that would resolve the corridor housing issues along the lines of A.B. 1617, but not according to

the discretion of Caltrans to continue to hold the houses.

4. To incorporate the above (by Caltrans only) into a stipulation in the federal court that binds the state and continues in effect the existing injunction against any freeway-related activity. Attorneys' fees in the existing litigation would be awarded at that time (with the amount either negotiated, arbitrated, or resolved on motion to the Court).


B. Upon amendment of the RTP, enactment of the legislative amendment to section 622, or December 31, 2007, whichever first occurs, Caltrans and the CTC will declare excess all 710 properties except the surface and subsurface estates needed for a tunnel project; and dispose of all properties within one year thereafter. Surface estates include only those needed for direct surface access needs and shall not include estates for which a subsurface easement for a tunnel may be reserved allowing for the disposal of the surface estate prior to any tunnel construction.

C. As part of this agreement, and so long as it is complied with, South Pasadena and her allies would agree as follows:

1. To refrain from challenging the existing RTP, RTIP, or other planning document on any grounds (including lack of authority to hold the properties, and Clean Air Act lack of conformity).
2. To cooperate by participation in a steering or advisory committee in preparing the environmental documentation on a tunnel proposal.
3. To participate with SCAG in developing a coordinated housing and other development program that utilizes the excess state-owned properties to meet local and regional goals, while protecting historic buildings within the corridor.
4. Not to oppose approval or construction of a tunnel that eliminates environmental impacts of a tunnel to the satisfaction of South Pasadena and her allies.

We look forward to advancing this protocol together in time for execution concurrently with the tunnel feasibility determination, and to meeting with you next month toward that purpose.

Respectfully,



Mayor Odom Stamps